

I. DESCRIPTION OF ENO RIVER STATE PARK

LOCATION AND ACCESS

Eno River State Park is located within the Eno River Valley in Orange and Durham counties, northwest of the city of Durham. The linear park has five access areas: Few's Ford, Pleasant Green, and Cabe Lands in Orange County; Cole Mill, located on the Orange-Durham county line; and Pump Station in Durham County. These areas offer entry into this scenic river environment and are easily reached from Interstate 85 by exiting onto Cole Mill Road. The Few's Ford access area, located approximately five miles north of I-85, contains the park headquarters.

The park's mailing address and telephone number are:

Eno River State Park
6101 Cole Mill Road
Durham, North Carolina 27705-9275
(919) 383-1686

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area is located in central Orange County south of the town of Hillsborough. Occoneechee Mountain is operated as a satellite to Eno River State Park.

PARK LAND

Eno River State Park consists of the river and – as of January 2002 – 2,709 acres of riparian land. Acquisition of additional land is planned to protect the river valley and its significant natural resources and to provide new outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities.

As the river flows eastward from Hillsborough, its waters roll past historic mill sites, river bluffs covered with flowering shrubs, rolling hills, forests, and fords used by early settlers. In places, the river is turbulent; rocky rapids arise where water rushes and swirls around rock outcrops in its path. Further downstream, the Eno is gentle and slow-moving, meandering quietly through serene surroundings.

The river valley is narrow and steep-walled. Much of the rolling landscape, carved and sculpted over the ages by swift-flowing water, recalls rugged, mountainous terrain found further west. Although the river environment remains a peaceful haven, it is vulnerable to the pressures of rapidly expanding urban development.

All the land around the Eno was repeatedly timbered over the last 250 years, with the last virgin timber harvested in 1941. Areas outside the park boundaries are still subject to logging, but inside

the park a pattern of succession unfolds. Ridges, slopes, and flood plains are once again heavily vegetated. Pine, red-cedar, tulip-poplar, maple, dogwood, oaks, and hickories dominate the forests. Mountain laurel, Catawba rhododendron, and ferns grow on slopes and bluffs. Wildflowers bloom beneath the trees in spring, and vines such as greenbrier, grape, and trumpet vine contribute to the diversity of the park's vegetation.

Plant communities along the river provide habitat for a variety of animals. Old fields are home to mourning dove and eastern cottontails who are adapted to the weedy environment typical of early succession. The hardwood forest produces seeds and fruits that feed such mammals as white-tailed deer, raccoons, and opossums. Chipmunks, gray squirrels, beaver, and an occasional river otter may also be observed. Wood ducks, great blue herons, belted kingfishers, red-tailed hawks, owls, and various songbirds also enjoy the park's aquatic environment.

VISITOR FACILITIES

Eno River State Park is a popular hiking park, offering trails of various types and levels of difficulty. One can follow the river bank, visit historic sites, journey through woodlands, or hike a short nature trail. Hikers who complete the strenuous ascent of the 3.75-mile Cox Mountain Trail are rewarded with views of the surrounding countryside for a 30-mile distance. Along the moderately difficult 1.65-mile Bobbitt's Hole Trail, certainly one of the most scenic spots in the park, water rushes through rock outcrops and shrubs overhang stone-lined bluffs. The park's approximately 21 miles of trails allow visitors to enjoy the beauty and serenity of nature. (Figure I-1)

While the park does not currently have any bridle trails, horseback riding is permitted along power line and telephone easements in the Few's Ford area. A side road beyond the park office and to the left of the picnic area leads to a horse trailer parking lot where horses can be unloaded. Horses are not permitted on hiking trails or elsewhere in the park, however, and the park has no bike trails.

Two picnic areas provide quiet places to eat while enjoying the open air. The picnic ground at the Few's Ford area is adjacent to the parking lot where 20 tables, six grills, a 12-table picnic shelter, restroom and drinking water are provided. A short trail leads to a bluff overlooking the river. A smaller picnic area is found in the Cole Mill access area near the parking lot. Ten tables, an eight-table picnic shelter, five grills, a group area with three tables, and two vault toilets are provided within a short distance of trail heads.

As the river flows through rolling hills and mountainous terrain, Class I, II, and III rapids are created. Canoeing is best when the bridge gauges read from one to three feet, which happens most often in winter and spring after heavy rains. When the river is over the three-foot level, swift water, low water dams, and dislodged trees create dangerous conditions. When the water level is less than the one-foot level, which is most of the year, portaging is necessary. Bridges are marked with gages indicating the water level of the river. Information on water conditions may

also be obtained at the park office. Rapids cease just downstream from the park where the river enters the Triassic Basin and moves more slowly. Canoe access points are located in several areas of the park.

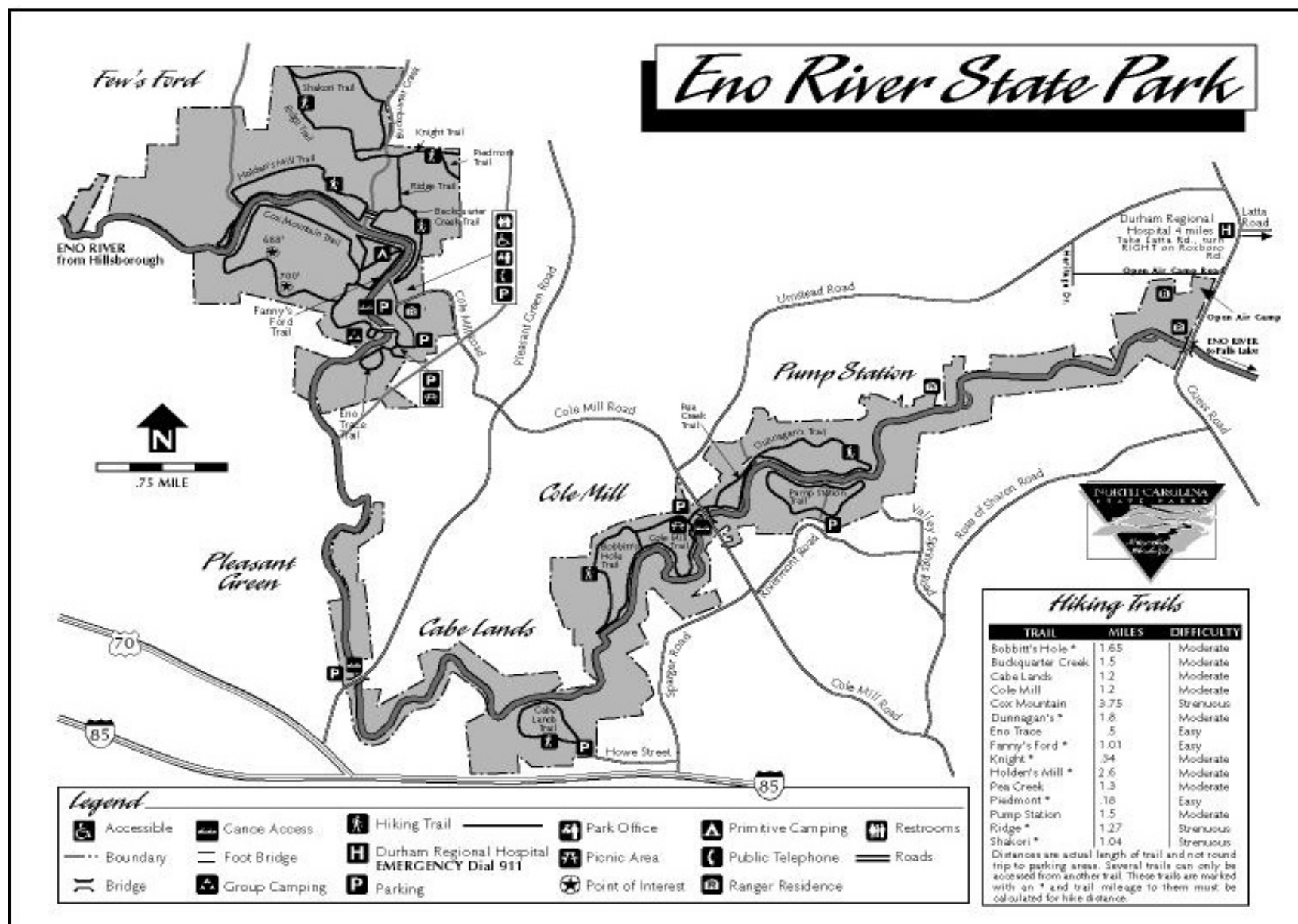


Figure I-1. Eno River State Park
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The Eno river is one of the best fishing streams in the Neuse River Basin. The river's water quality makes for good fishing along the banks. Game species include largemouth bass, bluegill, chain pickerel, crappie, and bullhead. The river is home to the Roanoke bass, also known as the red-eye, which is found only in the Eno-Neuse, the upper Tar River, the Chowan River, and the Roanoke River drainages.

Primitive family and group camping are offered at the park. These backpacking camping facilities offer secluded opportunities to experience the out-of-doors without distraction. All supplies, including water, must be packed to the sites. Both the five family camping sites and the group camp are at the Few's Ford access area. The park office, also located at Few's ford, contains visitor restrooms and a small exhibit area.

Nearby Occoneechee Mountain is the highest point in Orange County, at 887 feet. Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area habitats support species that are rare and significant to the region. Two miles of trail wind through the area's 120 acres, and picnicking and fishing are also available. (Figure I-2)

HISTORY OF THE PARK AREA

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the area around the Eno River was occupied by a substantial American Indian civilization. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Occoneechee Tribe as well as a Siouan tribe called the Eno lived along the river banks. Also living in the area was the Shakori Tribe, which shared many of the Eno's habits, allowing the two tribes to carry on a long association. The Eno and Shakori tribes merged into one nation at the end of the 17th century and settled near the present location of Durham in the village of Adshusheer.

Early explorers, including the surveyor John Lawson, frequently passed through the area along the Great Indian Trading Path. In 1701, Lawson spent a short time at the Adshusheer Village in the company of the chief of the Eno Nation, Enoe Will. As a result of his travels, Lawson has provided one of the most detailed descriptions of the American Indian civilization in early America.

After the arrival of European settlers, the Native American nations in the area weakened and dispersed, some moving north into New York, others migrating south to join the strong Catawba Tribe. White settlers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and other northern states moved into the Eno River area, using the paths and fields established earlier by the Native Americans.

The Eno River appears on the Moseley map of 1733. The name probably is from the Tuscarora Indian word "e-eno," meaning "a great way, far off."

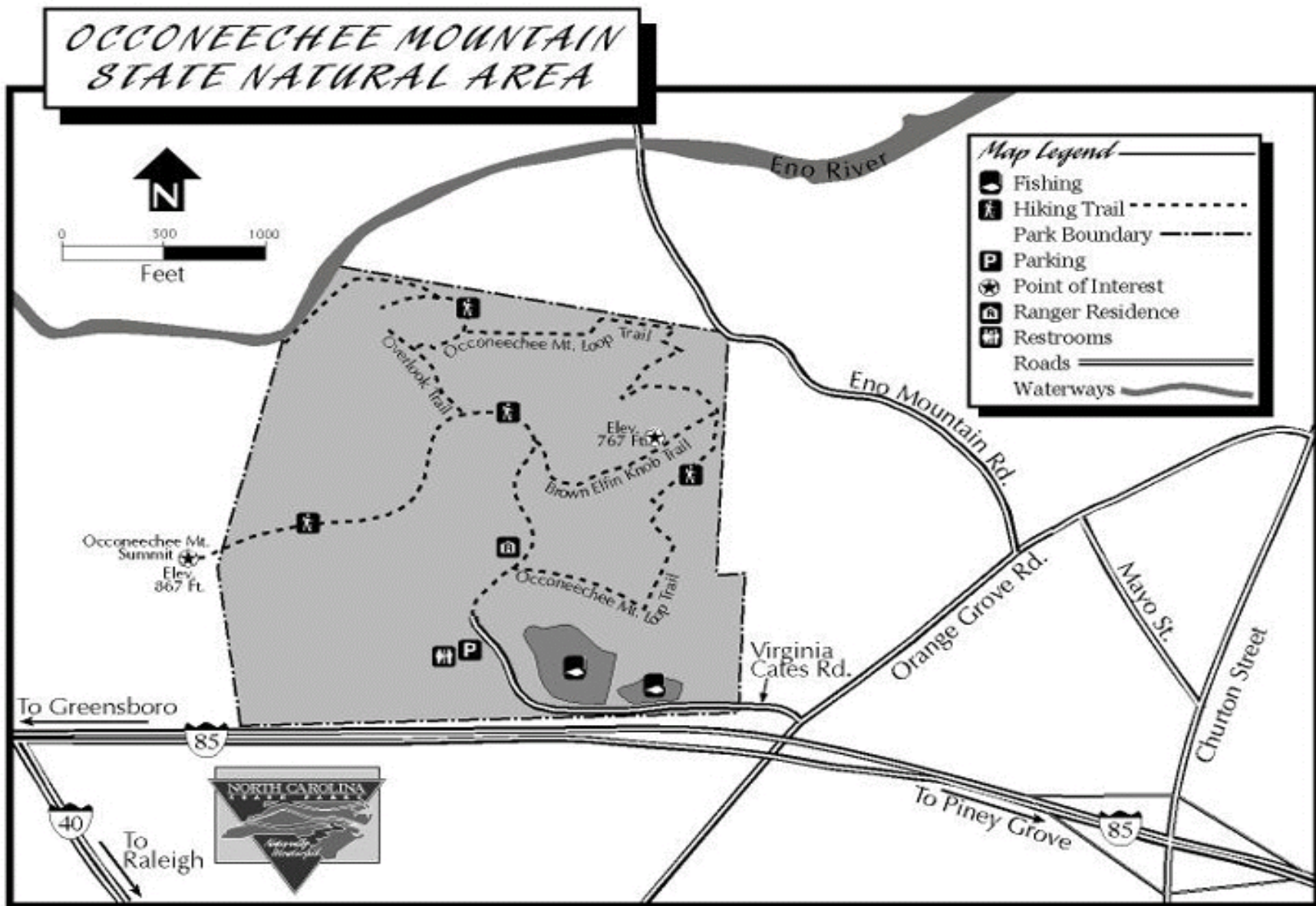


Figure I-2. Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area

Since its founding in 1754, the town of Hillsborough, has played an important role in the history of the Eno. During this early period, Hillsborough was the state capitol. No fewer than 80 late 18th and 19th century structures, 18 of which have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, remain standing in or near the town. Several other sites have historic ties to both the town and the river: the Dark Walk, a historic parkway along the south bank of the river; the Colonial Racepath and Akeenatzy (“Akeenatzy” is another of many early spellings of “Occoneechee”) Indian Village; and the Montrose Estate, laid out in the 1850s by English landscape gardener Thomas Paxton.

When European settlers began moving into the area from the north in the 1750s, the Eno River became an important part of area commerce. Mills sprang up all along the river, including Synnott’s Mill, the first built; William Few’s Mill (c. 1758); John Cabe Mill, the river’s most outstanding mill (c. 1799); Holden Mill (c. 1820); Berry Public Mill (c. 1850); and Berry Private Mill (c. 1854).

A post office was established in Durhamsville, renamed Durham in 1855 for Dr. Bartlett Snipes Durham (1822-58), who donated land for the railroad station. Durham, incorporated in 1866, became a center of the tobacco industry.

The Eno River became the subject of considerable debate and controversy in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1966, as a result of a recommendation by the Durham Department of Water Resources, the river was designated as a high priority source of city water and the location of a major reservoir. The city began acquiring land for the proposed impoundment, despite opposition by local landowners and environmentalists. The issue between preservationists and proponents of the city reservoir prompted the creation of the Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley (also known as The Eno River Association), a non-profit citizens group whose goal is the protection and preservation of the Eno River Valley. The Association was successful in its efforts to raise community support, and, as a result, the city abandoned its reservoir proposal in 1973. Because of the Association’s advocacy on behalf of the river and the river’s outstanding natural resources, the support of the Division of Parks and Recreation was gained. Through the Association’s efforts, a proposal to establish a state park along the Eno River — a sure way of protecting the river — was initiated. On May 17, 1972, the State Board of Conservation and Development approved and endorsed the concept of a state park on the Eno River. Soon after, the first parcel of land, a 300-acre tract known as the Red Hill Farm, was acquired with assistance from the Association and The Nature Conservancy and transferred to the state.

In 1975, approximately 600 acres of land originally acquired by the city of Durham for the reservoir was sold to the state for incorporation into the Eno River State Park. By this time, the state had managed to acquire scattered parcels along a 10-mile reach of river with the help of The Nature Conservancy. Including the city property, the park land then totaled about 1,100 acres.

During the summer of 1975, development of the master plan began. In August, three alternative plans were presented at a public meeting held in Hillsborough. The alternative plans illustrated, with some variation in park facility locations, a river corridor extending from Guess Road west along the river to near Hillsborough, a distance of 18 miles. Some residents, particularly those

owning land along the western portion of the river in Orange County, were upset and critical of the state's intentions, particularly of the state's use of eminent domain in acquiring land from unwilling sellers. Unrest grew as proponents of both sides debated the issue. In September, Orange County appointed a task force to study the landowners' objections to the master plan, and state park planning was curtailed at the request of county officials. In May of 1976, the Orange County Eno River Task Force presented its findings to the county, but its members remained split on the issue of eminent domain as a tool for river protection. The county subsequently adopted a policy statement that emphasized the importance of protecting the river in perpetuity and promoted both state park ownership and restricted private ownership as a means of river protection. Restrictions on the uses of privately owned land would be enforced by county conservation zoning and deed restrictions, including covenants or easements enforced by a public agency. In the policy statement, the state was requested to use adversarial condemnation only as a tool for river protection and not as a means of expanding the park.

The master planning for the park resumed in August 1976. The main objective was to complete the plan and get departmental approval so that a major cost-sharing project could be pursued with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service (SCS). In the same month, however, a lawsuit was filed against the state alleging that the adoption of a master plan constituted an unlawful taking of property. The suit was brought by seven landowners near Hillsborough. A restraining order and injunction was placed on the master planning activity and remained in effect until November 1978, when the North Carolina Supreme Court denied a petition for discretionary review (to reverse the Court of Appeals decision favoring the state). As a result of the lawsuit, formal planning and subsequent cost-sharing projects were delayed for over two years.

The master planning for the park was resumed in December 1978. The land acquisition recommendations were scaled back in order to gain additional support, and the master plan was finally adopted in June 1979. The final version called for a 2,913-acre park rather than the larger 8,750-acre park originally conceived.

The Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley continued to be instrumental in the development of the state park. The association raised funds and purchased lands along the river. Its annual Eno River Festival, the major fund-raiser held each July at West Point on the Eno—a Durham city park—became increasingly popular as the years passed. These private funds became particularly significant in the park's development because state appropriations for most of the 1970s and 1980s were minimal.

Private and state funds and land donations during this time were leveraged by matching federal Land and Water conservation Fund (LWCF) grants for outdoor recreation land acquisition and facility development. Starting with an initial grant in 1973, the state applied for and received seven grants totalling approximately \$1.93 million. Not only did the federal LWCF grants help with Eno River State Park development, but LWCF grants also helped the city of Durham acquire park land along the river and develop recreational facilities. Durham received approximately \$441,000 in three grants received from 1968 to 1975.

The Eno River area has become increasingly developed since establishment of the state park. Although much of the character along the river remains unchanged, many residential subdivisions have been developed nearby. The rate of change and development is much greater and most visible in the eastern portion of the valley near Durham and in areas within proximity of Interstate 85, US 70, and Hillsborough.

In 1994, the N.C. General Assembly passed a bill that allowed the Division to apply to the Natural Heritage Trust Fund and other sources for funds to acquire Occoneechee Mountain (Chapter 324, Section 26.8D). Occoneechee Mountain, located adjacent to Hillsborough, is operated as a satellite of Eno River State Park. In May of 1995 the Division of Parks and Recreation received a grant from the N.C. Natural Heritage Trust fund to purchase 96 acres, and in January 1998 the state acquired 59 acres, its first land at Occoneechee Mountain.

The Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley continues to actively support the park. The 2002 Eno River Festival had attendance of approximately 30,000, and profits from the festival continue to be used for park land acquisition.